

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Committee Members Present:** Larry Thomas (Vice Chairman), Kristin Papianou, Patrick Mossesso, Sue Dring, Cal Calnan, Larry Stern, John Chlebek, Thom Freeman, Heidi Krockta, Monica Fisler

**Members Absent:** Tracey Vasile (Chairman), Javed Hussain

**Others Present:** Sharon Wason, Bill Grieder, Steve Udden, Lorraine Brue, Ginny Coppola

Notes taken by: Maham Zia

The meeting was brought to order at 7:05 by Larry T, Vice Chairman

**Planning Board Presentation on Zoning Articles**

*Discussion on Accessory Apartments—*

Bill G explained that one of the purposes of this article is to help folks deal with family issues and not have duplexes built into. Sharon added that this helps guide people if they are converting a space to an accessory apartment. She said that the article puts a process in place while still taking family specific circumstances into consideration. Furthermore, Sharon added that the Article also includes ADA approval for the accessory apartments, including fire safety, accessibility, and sewage etc.

Larry T asked about the case where someone wants to build a new house with an attached apartment. It was clarified that you can bring that to the planning board and there should be no issues. Thom asked if bathrooms and closets are included in 8500 sqft of the accessory apartment. Sharon said that they were but shared utilities or laundry didn't count.

*Discussion on Amending Section 2.2 (Adding Map)—*

Sharon and Bill explained that the Foxborough Center Overlay District (FCOD) Plan will be added to the section so that people can identify which district they are in. Larry S asked what partial coloring meant in a lot. Sharon responded that the partial color meant that the lot was some part in the business district.

### *Discussion on Building Height—*

Larry T asked if there was any citizen input on this issue. Sharon responded that there was not. Larry T asked if having a walkout basement would mean that you would have a smaller house. Sharon explained that the base of the house would still be an average of the front and back elevation of the house so there should not be a difference.

Sue asked if this affects how many stories are allowed in a house. Sharon responded that the basement is only counted as a story if it is 4 ft above mean of the ground. So, a basement is not always a story. Sue asked what is meant by half a story in the article. Sharon said an example would be an attic, with a shorter room height of 7 feet. Larry S asked if you so you can have a walk up attic and a finished basement under this article. Sharon responded that that would be allowed now but actually was not allowed before.

### **Sign Bylaw (Lorraine, Bill, Sharon) 7:30**

Larry T and Sharon had a short discussion about how the electronic billboards piece was removed from the article because there was good attendance but low participation on the matter. The electronic billboards will be revisited after more public input.

Heidi asked about what would happen between now and spring, regarding this article. Sharon said that it will be amended later and gave some background. This came up because there were applicants who wanted the digital billboards and the Planning Board wanted to deal with the sign bylaw because this would be a long term decision. A consultant was hired for this process so that the article could strike a balance between responsiveness to the business community while also taking input from the people. Larry T added to this saying that the current bylaws vagueness would allow anyone to go to the ZBA and get an electronic billboard.

John and Sharon had a discussion about electronic billboards in which Sharon explained that electronic billboards are not placed on the lot with the business itself but on other lots along Route 1. Further clarifications were made that the signs that are right next to the actual business are of a different type than the ones being discussed here. The electronic billboards being discussed here are the ones that are visible from the street.

Monica and Bill G also had a short discussion on the permitted signs table included in the article. The discussion ended with Bill G saying that the article can be tweaked later.

Lorraine, Larry S and Bill G had a discussion about how this bylaw is better than what exists because it is more specific about application. Larry S disagrees with this point. Sharon added that if you have a good argument for why you need the sign, you can also go and try to get that passed. Additionally, she said that this is a way to recognize new technology and incentivize better sign design. In the present bylaw, some areas have completely different rules but this bylaw would make everyone subject to same rules and there would be no discrepancies.

Larry S asked how the bylaw affects help wanted signs. Sharon said that any sort of sign that is up for 30 -60 days fall under temporary signs and allowed. Examples of these include remax signs, political signs,

construction signs, temporary signs, parking signs, and open/close signs. Sharon further added that the other advantage is that the sign bylaw makes it easier to get rid of abandoned signs because ownership is clear. Larry S and Sharon also discussed preexisting signs. Sharon explained that conforming or nonconforming signs can be maintained and kept but nonconforming signs can only be replaced with similar if the sign is destroyed or completely worn out.

Patrick asked about why signage in District 2 is dependent on acres of the lot. Sharon responded that this was because spacing had to be taken into consideration so that there aren't too many signs in a single area. Patrick asked what that meant if there more tenants in a certain amount of space and Sharon explained that they could apply for a special sign. Patrick further asked what that process is like and if it can be affected by other interests like neighbors etc. Bill G added that another consideration made in this spacing was the speed limit in adjoining streets and most of the businesses are in agreement.

Heidi asked for more clarification on where billboards can be placed. Sharon explained that billboards specifically are signs that are not on the premise of the business by advertise from afar. To put signs on the premise, the business would use different signs, not billboards.

Larry S asked why general advertising is allowed in certain areas but not in downtown or residential areas. Sharon explained that the billboards are being limited to Route 1. Sue asked if everyone on Route 1 is going to get a sign up with the passing of this bylaw. Sharon and Bill both responded that this is being done and can continued to be done until the bylaw passes. Larry T added, saying that the economics are such that you can't put up too many billboards.

#### *Sign By-Law Discussion (Audience)—*

Cindy Haddad Drew from Cindy's Jewelry expressed concern regarding signs around her store and Asian Ginger and she said that other businesses shared her concern. She said that part of her concern stems from the light from her sign offering some security in case of burglary in her store since she is better able to see the security footage.

Larry T asked if Cindy's sign is nonconforming. Cindy said that her sign has a special permit and she hopes she can keep it under the new bylaw. Sharon said that Cindy should be able to keep her sign. Even in the case of damage or destruction, the sign can be replaced as is.

Steve Drew (Cindy's Husband) also voiced concern about the bylaw saying that there are restrictions in the downtown area which is owned mostly by small businesses that can't afford billboards. Bill G mentioned that downtown revitalization the downtown is a long term goal and that the bylaw may help create a better working relationship between the business and residential community. He also added that the Route 1 businesses are taking part of the bylaw process and that the planning board would like to hear more from businesses in the town as well.

Steve Udden voiced concern over bigger companies having more resources in terms of consultants and lawyers where it came to the tweaking process of the bylaw or even it's application. Bill G responded that the "tweakability" isn't the business owner's responsibility but the town's responsibility in the meetings. He said that we really need input from different districts to work with.

Conclusively, Bill G said that he hopes that passing this bylaw will help generate the conversation needed to come up with an inclusive bylaw in Spring.

**8:50 PM Adjourn**

Monica motioned to adjourn and Kristin seconded.

**Vote: 8/0/0**

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: January 7, 2015

Vote:

Tracey Vasile

Signature of Chairperson

Maham Zia

Signature of Secretary